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Summary

About this Release

In this paper we investigate the geographical distribution of disadvantaged areas across Australia. We use the Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), in particular the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, to identify areas with relatively high proportions of people with characteristics associated with low socio-economic status.

We define relatively disadvantaged areas as those Census Collection Districts (CDs) in the bottom 5% of index scores. If disadvantage is equally distributed across Australia, we would expect each geographical region to have similar proportions of people living in disadvantaged CDs. This is not however the case.

While the majority of people living in disadvantaged CDs are in urban areas there is a proportional over-representation of disadvantaged CDs in remote areas. Only 2.7% of Australians live in remote or very remote areas but 13.7% of these are in disadvantaged CDs compared with 5.1% of people in major cities.

The distribution of people living in disadvantaged CDs is not equally distributed across states and territories. Over 15% of people in the Northern Territory live in disadvantaged CDs. At the other end of the scale, less than 1% of people in the Australian Capital Territory are in disadvantaged CDs.

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